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Website Reviews

1. <http://www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp>

Fody.com is a fantastic website that offers a variety of creative possibilities for free. Not only does it allow users the capability to create personalized newspaper clippings but it also has pictures of animals that you can add your own text to in the form of thought bubbles, animated characters that write your text, a slideshow maker, and photo editor. There endless possibilities of how this can be used in the classroom. The newspaper feature can be used by having students write articles about any content related area. Having the article written and produced in this format would be more interesting and motivating for students. One of the other features I really liked was the photo editor. This could be used in an assortment of ways too but one use I thought of was for science projects. Taking a seemingly boring photo and spicing it up is a great way to add interest to a science fair project.

1. <http://camstudio.org/>

Camstudio is a free service that allows the user to capture screen shots of his or her computer. It also allows the user to capture audio action as well. CamStudio is simple to use and offers a variety of options for creating customized computer demonstrations. This website would be a great tool to use to save a demonstration of how to use a computer program or website. Having the activity saved will allow students to refer back to the directions if they have any questions about the process. Videos and captions can be added to the demonstration too.

1. <http://www.ask500people.com/>

This website is a great way for students to connect to the whole world. It is a free website that allows a person the capability to post a question and have people from all over the world respond. Using this website is simple and free. To create a question all you do is create an account. Creating an account literally takes about one minute. After the account is created all you do is write a question and follow the prompts to complete the process. It is simple and quick. This website could be used as an attention getting activity for the beginning of a unit or a fun way to end a lesson. I think this would be a good way to start a discussion about a particular subject and how different people in different parts of the world might have diverse perspectives.

1. <http://www.xtranormal.com/>

Xtranormal.com is a free website that allows users to create their own animated movies. To use the website you need to create an account. There is no membership fee required. Animation can be a great addition to instruction. The meat of any standard can be put into animation form to help engage students. This particular site (xtranormal.com) is particularly engaging for several reasons. There are opportunities to select a variety of scenes, characters, voices, props, and music. The only limit is one’s own imagination. Showing content in this way will help the curriculum seem more interesting and appealing. And it’s just plain funny to watch! When you can make education fun, appealing, and engaging it is a definite plus for students as well as teachers. Another great reason to teach with animation is that content can be presented in a way that can show real life applications. This would be a wonderful alternate assessment. When students have to learn content to put it into an animation I think they will be ready to get down to business. I could have students use the animation to explain a skill they have learned. This type of assessment would be good for any subject. One benefit of using animation as an assessment tool is that it will motivate students to learn the content so that they can use the cool technology. If the teacher and students agree to share the movies with peers it also allows students to see how their peers would explain the content. Other students can benefit from seeing the content explained in a variety of ways.

1. <http://www.visuwords.com/>

I love visuwords.com! This site is a dictionary and thesaurus all tied up in on package. The site is absolutely free and does not require a membership. All you do is simply enter a word in the search bar and a graphic organizer will appear that has the word and its definition along with other words that are connected to its meaning in a variety of ways. This is a great way for students to see various connections to other words and ideas thereby helping them better understand the meaning of the word. This could be a fantastic way to explore words on a science word wall! I could just imagine a science word wall done in the same way that the visuwords graphics are done. This would be a great way for students to make connections to a variety of science vocabulary which would help to deepen their understanding.